

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Honorable Brian Huff

Jefferson County Courthouse
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Kristie McColough
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Vanessa P. Ephraim
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Executive Director: Susan Cotton

Council Priorities

- 1. Continue to build collaboration among child serving agencies, organizations and individuals in Jefferson County.**
- 2. Continue to build a school health network that includes nurses and administrators from each of the county's school systems. The purpose of the network is to identify common needs and collaborate to meet those needs.**
- 3. Strengthen efforts to provide access to quality out of school programs and activities.**

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Support and expand existing efforts to provide comprehensive screening of preschool children in the areas of vision, hearing, dental, development, speech, language, mental health, etc.

Action Steps

- 1) Develop and provide training to increase awareness of the value of screenings.
- 2) Identify current screening efforts.
- 3) Conduct meetings with those currently providing screenings.
- 4) Plan strategies for implementing select screenings (Pilot Projects).
- 5) Seek funding opportunities.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Provide economically disadvantaged youth with guidance to help prepare them for transition from adolescence to adulthood

Action Steps

- 1) Convene administrators and directors of programs that serve economically disadvantaged youth.
- 2) Provide venue for program providers to share resources/information/needs.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Increase access to meaningful after and out of school activities

Action Steps

This Committee has identified North Avondale as a pilot project with the following action steps:

- 1) Identify and contact area agencies to determine feasibility of offering programs/services to North Avondale youth.
- 2) Consult school personnel such as principal and reading coach.
- 3) Develop a calendar of events for North Avondale.
- 4) Monitor success.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

School health network

Action Steps

- 1) Compile and generate data to assist with funding pursuits.
- 2) Gather more specific information about what type of help is needed regarding school nurses five major health concerns: asthma, diabetes, obesity, nutrition and mental health.
- 3) Convene regularly scheduled meetings with members of the School Health Network around the issues identified in #2 above.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

No Issues submitted for this category

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Establish a coordinated community response to domestic violence

Action Steps

- 1) Establish a structure that provides the venue for the CCR to begin to form.
- 2) Identify community leaders and members who are interested in the issue of domestic violence and extend personal invitations for them to attend regularly scheduled informational/educational meetings.
- 3) Solicit volunteers from the Safety Committee to contact speakers for topics identified.

Policy Recommendations

- Secure funding base for CHIP: ALL Kids, SOBRA Medicaid and Alabama Child Caring Foundation.
- Fund a school health system for every public school campus.
- Establish an incentive program to recruit and retain special education teachers.
- Establish minimum mileage for each school system in the state.
- Modify State law governing either youth or adult jurisdiction to include 18-year-olds.
- Mandatory kindergarten starting at age 5.
- Access to the Special Education Trust Fund should be allowed to improve the quality of care for children from high risk families.
- To be eligible for funding, providers must meet established standards of care and meet outcome measures.
- Develop Pre-K Curriculum Guidelines.
- Annually earmark general funds for child care to the extent needed to draw down all federal funds for child care.